

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DURBAN 0360

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: BLACK ATTITUDES ON POLITICAL CHANGE IN SOUTH
AFRICA PRESENTED AT GERMAN CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: A STUDY, TERMED BY THE PRESS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE POLL EVER MADE OF URBAN BLACK POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN SOUTH AFRICA, WAS RELEASED AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN GERMANY JUNE 11. IT REPORTED THAT AS OF MID-1977, 44 PERCENT OF URBAN BLACKS POLLED SUPPORT CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI AS THEIR LEADER, FOLLOWED BY 22 PERCENT FOR THE ANC LEADERS, 18 PERCENT FOR OTHER HOMELAND LEADERS, 7 PERCENT FOR THE PAC AND 6 PERCENT FOR THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT. IT ALSO CLAIMED THAT POLLED BLACKS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVOR A FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, PREFER A MULTI-RACIAL UNITARY STATE WITH A "LIBERAL DEMOCRACY" AND POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR WHITES, SEE ECONOMIC CHANGE AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN POLITICAL CHANGE, AND SUPPORT THE SOWETO DEMONSTRATIONS. HOWEVER 28 PERCENT CLAIMED TO BELIEVE

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VIOLENCE WILL BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE CHANGE, AND A LARGER PROPORTION OF YOUNGER AND/OR BETTER EDUCATED BLACKS SUPPORT THE NEED FOR VIOLENCE AND OPPOSED SHARING POLITICAL RIGHTS WITH WHITES THAN DO THE OLDER, MORE TRADITIONALLY ORIENTED BLACKS. THE SURVEY CONDUCTED IN 1977 AFTER THE SOWETO DISTURBANCES AND BEFORE BPC'S BANNING, CONCLUDED INKATHA WAS THE "STRONGEST ORGANIZED POLITICAL TENDENCY AMONG BLACKS"

AND SUGGESTED IT WOULD PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE IN FORMING URBAN BLACK OPINION ON CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. THE REPORT CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT "THE READINESS FOR CONFLICT IS GROWING, ESPECIALLY AMONG URBAN BLACK YOUTH". END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS REPORTS A CONFERENCE WAS HELD NEAR FREIBURG, WEST GERMANY, FROM JUNE 11-15 TO DISCUSS "PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA". MEETING WAS HELD UNDER AUSPICES OF THE ARNOLD BERGSTRASSER INSTITUTE AND WAS ATTENDED BY NUMEROUS PROMINENT SOUTH AFRICANS FROM ALL RACES AND POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING TWO NATIONALIST MPS AND THE EXILED ANC. NAMES OF ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE BUT SOME OF THOSE ATTENDING WERE CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI, PROFESSOR PIET CILLIE, DAVID CURRY, REV. ALLAN BOESAK, PROFESSOR HENNIE KOTZEE, MRS. DEBORAH MABILETSA, BAREND DU PLESSIS, NAT MP LOUIS NEL, PROFESSOR LAWRENCE SCHLEMMER, BENNY KHOAPA AND HARRY SCHWARZ. AT LEAST TWO PROMINENT BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS, DR. NTHATO MOTLANA AND WILKINSON KAMBULE WERE PREVENTED FROM ATTENDING BY SAG INSISTENCE THEY TRAVEL ON TRANSKEI OR BOPHUTHATSWANA PASSPORTS (WHICH THEY REFUSED TO DO). U.S., DUTCH AND WEST GERMAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS REPORTEDLY ALSO ATTENDED. MEETING WAS TO HAVE BEEN HELD IN PRIVATE BUT PUBLICITY SURROUNDING THE PASSPORT PROBLEMS OF THE AFOREMENTIONED PAIR FOCUSED PRESS ATTENTION ON THE GATHERING. NEVERTHELESS ALL DELIBERATIONS WERE IN PRIVATE.

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3. PREPARATIONS FOR MEETING REPORTEDLY TOOK SEVERAL YEARS WITH THE INSTITUTE COMMISSIONING SIX IN-DEPTH PUBLIC OPINION POLLS IN SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IT ANALYZED AND PUBLISHED AS A BOOK AND PRESENTED AS BASIS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION. WHILE ONLY HINTS AT THE DELIBERATIONS THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN REPORTED HERE, PRESS ACCOUNTS OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE POLLS HAVE RECEIVED WIDE ATTENTION AND PURPORT TO REPRESENT THE BEST SCIENTIFICALLY COMPILED STUDY OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF URBAN BLACKS.

4. PRESS REPORTS SO FAR HAVE ONLY EXCERPTED PORTIONS OF THE POLLS, ASSESSING THE POPULARITY OF BLACK LEADERS AMONG THE URBAN BLACK POPULATION OF SOWETO, PRETORIA AND DURBAN. POLL WAS CONDUCTED IN 1977 BETWEEN THE 1976 SOWETO DISTURBANCES AND OCTOBER, 1977, BANNING OF THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT. THE REPORTED PERCENTAGES OF POPULAR SUPPORT WERE:

CHIEF BUTHELEZI	44 PERCENT
ANC LEADERS	22 PERCENT
HOMELAND LEADERS (BESIDES BUTHELEZI)	18 PERCENT
PAC LEADERS	7 PERCENT
BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT	6 PERCENT

(FOR SA POSTS: FIGURES ON ANC AND HOMELAND LEADERS DIFFER FROM PRESS REPORTS. WE HAVE ACCESS TO FINAL REPORT, IN GERMAN,

AND SA PRESS MISTAKENLY ADDED NELSON MANDELA'S 18 PERCENT AS A SEPARATE HEADING FROM ANC WHEN IT ACTUALLY WAS SUBSUMED WITHIN ANC TOTAL. OTHER ANC FIGURES SUCH AS OLIVER TAMBO, THE LATE ALBERT LUTHULI, WINNIE MANDELA AND WALTER SISULU ALL POLLED LESS THAN 1 PERCENT APIECE. PRESS AT TIME IGNORED OTHER HOMELAND LEADERS, WHOSE COMBINED TOTALS EQUAL 18 PERCENT).

THE REPORT SAID THE "OUTSTANDING POLITICAL PHENOMENON IN BLACK URBAN POLITICS IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, GATSHA BUTHELEZI. THE RESULTS SHOW....HE IS THE (IN CAPITALS) POLITICAL FIGURE OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICA...AND NOT A MERE TRIBAL LEADER...ALTOGETHER 40 PERCENT OF HIS SUPPORT AMONG URBAN BLACKS ARE NOT ZULUS." THE REPORT ADDED THAT INKATHA "REPRESENTS BY FAR THE STRONGEST ORGANIZED POLITICAL TENDENCY AMONG URBAN BLACKS" AND THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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25 PERCENT OF ANC SUPPORTERS APPROVE OF INKATHA, "A REFELECTION OF THE AMBIVALENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANC TRADITION AND INKATHA".

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5. THE REPORT HIGHLIGHTED SEVERAL OTHER INSIGHTS INTO BLACK OPINION, I.E.

-- "A MULTI-RACIAL UNITARY STATE WAS OVERWHELMINGLY THE MOST POPULAR CONCEPT AMONG ALL SHADES OF POLITICAL OPINION." HOWEVER THIS WAS ADVOCATED SOLELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY BY ONLY A THIRD OF ALL BLACKS WHILE A THIRD WERE ADVOCATING A SHARING OF POLITICAL POWER BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS. THE REPORT SAID "IT WILL PROBABLY DEPEND TO A LARGE EXTENT ON BUTHELEZI'S SUPPORTERS HOW THE FORMATION OF OPINION ON THESE DIFFERENT CONCEPTS WILL DEVELOP AMONG URBAN BLACKS".

-- 95 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY DESIRED TO HAVE WHAT THE WHITE MAN HAD.

-- A "VERY LARGE MAJORITY" FAVORED THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, WITH PURE SOCIALISM ADVOCATED BY ONLY 3 PERCENT. "NEARLY TWO-THIRDS" PREFERRED THE CONCEPT OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OVER UNCLASSIFIED

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PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, WITH MOST OF THE MINORITY IN FAVOR OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP BEING AMONG THE MORE TRADITIONAL AND RURAL-ORIENTED RESPONDENTS. 63 PERCENT PREFERRED ENGAGEMENT IN AN ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS, WHERE A PERSON COULD SUCCEED OR FAIL BASED ON ABILITY, TO HOLDING A FIXED-SALARY JOB.

-- 88 PERCENT REJECTED THE CONTENTION THAT A UNIVERSITY EDUCATED BLACK SHOULD EARN THE SAME AS A WORKING-CLASS BLACK.

-- 65 PERCENT OF BLACKS, INCLUDING A SLIGHT MAJORITY OF THE MOST POLITICALLY INFORMED AND INTERESTED, BELIEVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR LIVING STANDARDS CAN STILL COME THROUGH BLACK-WHITE NEGOTIATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, 28 PERCENT BELIEVED BLACK WOULD HAVE TO RESORT TO FIGHTING AND VIOLENCE TO SEE SUCH AN IMPROVEMENT. THIS QUARTER IS SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS NEARLY HALF OF THE MORE EDUCATED AND ECONOMICALLY BETTER-OFF GROUPS. THE REPORT CAUTIONS THAT THE STATISTICS INDICATE THAT AS BLACKS ARE URBANIZED AND EDUCATED THEY BECOME MORE DISILLUSIONED AND LESS HOPEFUL OF PEACEFUL CHANGE. IT STATES "THE READINESS FOR CONFLICT IS GROWING, ABOVE ALL, AMONG URBAN BLACK YOUTH".

-- A LARGE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR "LIBERAL DEMOCRACY" EMERGED. FOR EXAMPLE, 72 PERCENT FAVORED OPPOSITION PARTIES, APPROXIMATELY A THIRD WERE DESCRIBED AS "NON-DEMOCRATS" WHILE A THIRD WERE "PREDOMINANTLY DEMOCRATIC/ IN ATTITUDE AND A THIRD WERE "TRUE DEMOCRATS". THOSE CLASSED AS "NON-DEMOCRATS" WERE ALSO LARGELY THE LESS EDUCATED, POORER AND MORE TRADITIONAL SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION.

-- "THREE-QUARTERS" OF ALL RESPONDENTS WANTED EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR WHITES BUT AMONG THE YOUNGER, UNDER-34 GROUP THE FIGURE WAS ONLY 64 PERCENT, WHEREAS IT WAS 82 PERCENT
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AMONG THEIR ELDERS, INDICATING THE HIGH DEGREE OF TOLERANCE TOWARDS WHITES "MAY NOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY".

-- 51 PERCENT INDICATED ECONOMIC CHANGE AS THEIR TOP PRIORITY, 20 PERCENT POLITICAL CHANGE, 13 PERCENT EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND 12 PERCENT SOCIAL CHANGE. AGAIN THE BETTER EDUCATED AND MORE WELL TO DO WANTED POLITICAL CHANGE TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN THE POORER SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY WHO WERE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH ECONOMIC CHANGE.

-- 57 PERCENT AGREED THE 1976 SOWETO DEMONSTRATIONS WERE A GOOD THING.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE BONN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE ARNOLD BERGSTRAESSER INSTITUTE AND ANY LOCAL COMMENTARY ON THE CONFERENCE OR ITS FINDINGS.

7. FURTHER POST COMMENTS SEPTEL.
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